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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO
NOT REVIEWED BY S/S.

January 22, 1980

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TO: The Secretary
FROM: S/R - Victor H. Palmieri (CV)
SUBJECT: Emergency Fund Drawdown for Assistance
to Afghan Refugees in Pakistan

Issue for Decision

Whether to recommend to the President that he authorize the use of \$5.3 million from the United States Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund to finance assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Essential Factors

At the present time there are at least 420,000 Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Winter is closing in and serious food, shelter and medical needs exist for these refugees. These problems are bound to worsen in the coming weeks.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has launched an urgent appeal to the world community for \$55 million in cash and commodities to assist in meeting the needs of these refugees. Towards this appeal the United States has already contributed \$5.3 million in food and ancillary freight. But the High Commissioner's ability to move fast depends on his having actual cash or those supplies essential to refugee relief. (A contribution in kind allows the United States to receive the benefits of a visible involvement in this program.) Decisions on the mix of cash and in kind contributions will be determined after consultations with the High Commissioner.

Consequently, I believe that the President should draw down the United States Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund by up to \$5.3 million. This would be in keeping with our pledge to contribute to the UNHCR one-third of the appeal.

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There is also a domestic political reason for the Emergency Fund for Pakistan. The current Congressional perception is that the United States is once again slow to respond to an emerging refugee assistance effort. It also hurts us on the Hill if we are viewed as being too late with our efforts. Finally, I believe that a contribution such as this provides important leverage in convincing the Pakistani government to agree to the use of U.S.-owned rupees.

That you sign the attached memorandum to the President requesting that he authorize the use of \$5.3 million from the Emergency Fund for this refugee assistance program.

1. Memorandum for the President
2. Memorandum from the President to the Secretary of State

Concurrences: M/COMP: LJurvis (draft)
L/M: KMalmborg (draft)
RP: JPurcell (draft)
RP: CRussell (subs)
NEA/PAB: MHorndlow (subs)
S/R: Floy (draft)

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